

THE QUESTION: HOW CAN I HELP SOMEONE WHO'S STRUGGLING IN THEIR FAITH?
THE POINT: ENCOURAGEMENT STRENGTHENS RELATIONSHIPS

Memory Verse: 1 THESS. 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing.

Introduction and Background: This lesson identifies two individual who made a significant impact in the spreading of the gospel in the early church, Barnabas and Saul. Saul's name was later changed to Paul. He was a persecutor of the followers of Jesus (Acts 9: 1-2) Saul was converted on the Damascus Road (Acts 9:3-20) and became a follower and witness for Jesus. He wrote thirteen of the books in the New Testament.

Barnabas is identified in Acts 4:36 as Joses, a Levite from the country of Cyprus. The name Joses, (Greek for Joseph) commonly known as Barnabas, was given to him by the apostles. Barnabas means son of consolation or "son of encouragement." He was an encourager and encouraged Saul and the early church in ministry.

Encouragement is a gift of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:7-8) and a ministry that every Christian can and should participate. Encouragement should be done in a positive way not in a way to influence harm.

Encourage: give support, confidence, or hope to someone; help or stimulate; to inspire to continue on a chosen course (Merriam-webster.com)

I. ENCOURAGE ACCEPTANCE ACTS 9:26-28

- The apostles did not openly accept Saul as a follower of Christ because he once persecuted believers.
- The Holy Spirit sent Barnabas to encourage the apostles to accept Saul as a brother in Christ.
- We all will need help, support, and encouragement in fulfilling God's assignment.
- The Holy Spirit sent Ananias to support Saul to lay hands on him to receive his sight. (Acts 9:10-16)
- The Holy Spirit sent Barnabas to support Saul, he will also send help to support you in your ministry.
- ❖ When was the last time someone encouraged you and what impact did it have in your life?
- ❖ How would you encourage someone during this season of Covid -19?

II. ENCOURAGE GROWTH ACTS 11:21-24

After the death of Stephen, many believers were scattered from Jerusalem to Phenice, Cyprus and Antioch these believers witness to their Gentiles neighbor and a great number of them believed. (Acts 11:19-21)

- Barnabas was sent to Antioch to encourage the new Gentiles converts in their spiritual growth.
- Today, new believers need a Barnabas to mentor and encouraged their spiritual growth.
- As new believers are discipled, their faith will increase, the Holy Spirit will empower them to help grow other believers thus adding to the body of Christ.
- ❖ What do you think new believers need most when they come to Christ and unite with a church?
- ❖ How can you be more intentional about the growth of others?

III. ENCOURAGE SERVICE ACTS 11:25-26

Barnabas recruits Saul to Antioch to help build up the church. Antioch was fertile ground and many new converts were added to the church. At Antioch, Barnabas and other disciples were first called Christians.

- As Christians Barnabas and Saul had a devoted life in serving God and mankind.
- Serving God is one of the most important principles of the Christian faith.
- Believers are expected to serve God, the church and man
- ❖ How can the church use the life of Barnabas and Saul to encourage members to serve?
- ❖ What are other names believers are referred to as other than Christians?

Spiritual Truth: Christians are commanded to encourage others, serve God, the Church and mankind thus demonstrating Spiritual growth and a commitment to the Lord.